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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Poland

REPORT

SUBJECT Polish Fears Concerning a Possible
Revival of German Strength

DATE DISTR.

10 JUL 1959

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POLANDPolitical

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The state of public opinion in Poland on the eve of the GENEVA Conference

1. With the current negotiations on BERLIN, confusion in the minds of the politically-conscious non-Communist circles is on the increase. The feelings of apathy and resignation which have been prevailing so far have in a sense been deepened by the thought that the future outlook may be even bleaker than up to now. The Party has put about the view that the BERLIN conflict cannot end in any other way than in a victory for the Soviet. The West is weaker than the Soviet bloc and the trend in world politics has already begun to be towards the capitulation of the free world without a war. The West already finds itself on the edge of the slide. The password in the whispering campaign circulated among Polish intellectuals is: "It is not worth backing the weaker side. For once in history the Poles can be cleverer than before and ally themselves in all seriousness with the winning side". This line of propaganda does not, however, attract intellectual and politically minded circles to any great degree. The belief in America's strength is still strong, especially in the broad social layers among the workers and peasants. Nevertheless, no one can say how much wishful thinking lies behind this attitude.

2. For some weeks a rumour has been circulating in WARSAW about a planned revision of the ODER-NEISSE frontier. It is widely thought that something is brewing in MOSCOW despite persistent denials from the Russian side. One fact is clear, however, and that is that the revision of the frontier has been discussed in MOSCOW both between the Russians and the Germans and the Russians and the Poles. No details have leaked out, but in high Party circles there has been no attempt to deny that the Central Committee has been kept informed about these

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discussions. As far as is known, no conclusions have yet been reached nor has any concrete plan emerged for the revision of the frontier, but the rumours have so far taken root that there is now a marked reluctance on the part of the peasants to buy land in the Westernmost areas of Poland. Underlying all the discussions on the subject is the realisation that Poland cannot in any way prevent MOSCOW's decision about an eventual frontier revision. How the Poles will react to a possible frontier revision is difficult to say but it would be rash to overestimate the strength of their protests.

3. The development of the BERLIN conflict is arousing mixed feelings in Poland. One most often hears bitter indignation: "The Americans and British refused to sacrifice a single soldier for Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia in defence of the freedom of these countries. Now they seem ready to die for 2½ million Germans in BERLIN. They feel nearer to the Germans than to us. They have already written Poland off and we have nothing more to expect from this direction".

4. The arming of West Germany with atomic weapons is also causing a lot of bad feeling. There is a strong belief that in the event of war West Germany would not hesitate to use atomic weapons against the Poles. Whereas people are prepared to believe that the Anglo-Saxons would prefer to avoid using atomic weapons on Polish territory, it is certain that quite the opposite is felt about the Germans and the Russians. It is believed that the German desire for revenge against Poland is very strong, stronger than the Anglo-Saxons appreciate. The propaganda which is being spread in this connection throughout the Party organisations fans these feelings of fear and gives them an anti-American edge. The Americans are blamed for giving the German barbarians these new weapons of destruction which will be used first and foremost by the Germans against the Poles in order to create the Germans' Lebensraum.

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5. Naturally, here and there, one meets with the argument that if the West Germans are not given atomic weapons the prospect arises of German unification on Soviet conditions. This conjures up the possibility of an alliance between a united Germany and the Soviet Union, with Poland caught between two fires. It is argued that Poland's chances of eventual survival in such a situation would be even smaller than now. The Communists' answer is that in the long run Poland's only chance is for Germany to be united on Soviet lines and that it is, therefore, wiser for the Poles to begin now competing with the Germans in their loyalty to the Soviet Union. This is the only way to create a counter-weight in MOSCOW to increasing German influence there. Such views are not typical but they are heard more often now than they were two years ago.

6. A third world war is not looked upon as an impending reality but is not considered altogether impossible. It is considered in the Russians' interest to have this war today rather than tomorrow. Others hold that the West cannot now take the risk of war and that the BERLIN conflict, therefore, is more likely to end in Western concessions. There is a rumour in circulation that the Russians have a special secret weapon up their sleeve which they do not talk about.

7. In spite of all the divisions of feeling and sentiment in Poland there are not many who want a Russian victory in the BERLIN conflict. Everyone knows that when the Western allies are thrown out of BERLIN and the DDR is changed to a normal satellite state Poland's political situation inside the Soviet bloc will be worsened and her isolation from the West even greater than it is now. This can result not only in an even greater aggravation of domestic political situation in Poland but also, and this is even more important, in Poland's economic Anschluss with the Soviet Union. Poland would then be transformed into a mere source of raw materials for the Soviet, the DDR and CSR.

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This is the prospect which people with an economic education fear most of all.

8. No one in Poland takes the RABICKI plan seriously. If the DDR becomes a complete Satellite state then Poland has nothing to gain by Soviet occupation troops leaving Polish territory. It is only five hours marching^{time} for armoured troops from the Polish East frontier to WARSAW. The RABICKI plan cannot inspire any feeling of security or create any guarantee in face of the terror which the Poles fear most: atomic war on Polish territory.

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